

**Senator Olympia J. Snowe
Chair, Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
S. Res. 120
April 25, 2005**

Statement for the Record

Mr. President, I rise today in support of a Senate Resolution that honors our nation's 25 million small businesses and the tremendous contributions they make to our economy, as we celebrate the Small Business Administration's (SBA) National Small Business Week which runs April 24 through April 30, 2005.

Small businesses form a solid economic foundation for growth and job creation. The success of our nation's small businesses have helped create nearly three-quarters of all new jobs and produce 50 percent of our country's Gross Domestic Product.

Since becoming Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have made it one of my top priorities to be a megaphone for small businesses and help raise the needs and concerns of our countries' job creators in the Senate. Each year, there are 3 to 4 million new business start-ups – and one in 25 adult Americans take the steps to start a business. With one quarter of existing small business owners intending to form another business, this is clearly a sector that deserves our accolades and recognition.

And of course, one of our most valuable assets for ensuring the success of small businesses is the Small Business Administration. This agency is pivotal in overseeing the delivery of financial and business development tools for millions of aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses across the

United States. And since 1999, the SBA's programs have helped created and retain over 4.5 million jobs.

Particularly, the SBA's financing programs have been a crucial source to accessing capital for small businesses, and have never been more in demand with both the 7(a) program and 504 program delivering measurable results. The numbers from FY2004 represent these programs indisputable success, with the 7(a) program providing over \$13.5 billion in loans to help small businesses create 132,603 new jobs. The 504 program lent \$4 billion to support the creation of 86,847 jobs.

Furthermore, the SBA's entrepreneurial development programs assisted almost 1.5 million start-up and existing small businesses. In fact, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program served over 725,000 clients and helped create or retain over 168,000 jobs in FY2003, while the SBA's Women's Business Center's training and counseling helped to create or retain over 6,500 jobs in FY2003.

We have also provided small businesses with tax relief to help grow their business. For example, I championed an increase in the amount a small business can deduct when they invest in equipment and other business assets – capital that fuels expansion and job creation.

So as we celebrate our nation's small businesses, we must be mindful of Congress's responsibility to ensure that each business has the opportunity to flourish. With the SBA's budget drastically declining by 36 percent over the

last five years, I will not hesitate to take action and ensure that this vital sector continues to have the valuable resources they deserve.

The SBA has been a critical partner to millions of small enterprises as well as aspiring entrepreneurs as they embark on the path to prosperity and job creation. The least we can do is strengthen, not erode, the SBA's core loan and technical assistance programs that have proven time and again to be the keystone in aiding the efforts and dreams of America's entrepreneurs.

Mr. President, today we celebrate our nation's entrepreneurs and honor America's small businesses. I urge my colleagues to show their support for the small businesses in their states and support this Resolution. We must remember that the investment and support that we provide to our small business today is integral to our nation's economic and job security tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. President.